

2 Samuel 14 - Thursday, April 16th, 2015

- Chapter 13 ended with David's firstborn son Amnon being murdered by David's other son Absalom for raping David's daughter.
- This because, David is now the recipient of the consequences God through the prophet Nathan foretold would come upon him.
- As we pick it up the more consequences of David's adultery with Bathsheba and his murder of her husband Uriah will unfold.

1 So Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the king's heart was concerned about Absalom. 2 And Joab sent to Tekoa and brought from there a wise woman, and said to her, "Please pretend to be a mourner, and put on mourning apparel; do not anoint yourself with oil, but act like a woman who has been mourning a long time for the dead. 3 Go to the king and speak to him in this manner." So Joab put the words in her mouth.

- I find it interesting that in verse one we're told Joab perceived David's heart was concerned about his banished son Absalom.
- As such, he hatches a plan to bring about reconciliation between father and son by sending this woman from Tekoa to David.
- Lest you think that Joab has the best of intentions in doing this, let me hasten to say that I believe he has a deceptive agenda.

- Here's why, back in 2 Samuel 3 David pronounced a curse on Joab for killing Abner because Abner had killed Joab's brother.

2 Samuel 3:28-30 28 Afterward, when David heard it, he said, "My kingdom and I are guiltless before the LORD forever of the blood of Abner the son of Ner. 29 Let it rest on the head of Joab and on all his father's house; and let there never fail to be in the house of Joab one who has a discharge or is a leper, who leans on a staff or falls by the sword, or who lacks bread." 30 So Joab and Abishai his brother killed Abner, because he had killed their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle.

- I would suggest Joab's deceptive agenda to bring reconciliation between David and Absalom is to protect his own position.
- In other words, Absalom, who absent Amnon is the heir to the throne, would basically insure that Joab would keep his title.
- Moreover, I'm of the belief that in an ironic way, Joab and Absalom are becoming more and more embittered towards David.

- Let me explain, Joab was cursed for killing the one who killed his brother, and Absalom was banished for killing his brother.
- Then Joab was avenging the death of his brother, and Absalom was avenging the rape of his sister by killing his brother.
- Sadly, the common denominator in this irony is David himself and though for different reasons, both men will be a problem.

4 And when the woman of Tekoa spoke to the king, she fell on her face to the ground and prostrated herself, and said, "Help, O king!" 5 Then the king said to her, "What troubles you?" And she answered, "Indeed I am a widow, my husband is dead. 6 Now your maidservant had two sons; and the two fought with each other in the field, and there was no one to part them, but the one struck the other and killed him. 7 And now the whole family has risen up against your maidservant, and they said, 'Deliver him who struck his brother, that we may execute him for the life of his brother whom he killed; and we will destroy the heir also.' So they would extinguish my ember that is left, and leave to my husband neither name nor remnant on the earth." 8 Then the king said to the woman, "Go to your house, and I will give orders concerning you." 9 And the woman of Tekoa said to the king, "My lord, O king, let the iniquity be on me and on my father's house, and the king and his throne be guiltless." 10 So the king said, "Whoever says anything to you, bring him to me, and he shall not touch you anymore." 11 Then she said, "Please let the king remember the LORD your God, and do not permit the avenger of blood to destroy anymore, lest they destroy my son." And he said, "As the LORD lives, not one hair of your son shall fall to the ground."

- I have to say that this woman of Tekoa is quite the actress. She should be given an Academy Award for this performance.
- She has succeeded in convincing David to essentially forgo and forget the law in favor of her emotional and sympathetic plight.
- This was not an easy do by virtue of the fact that David was the king and chief judge of Israel who now finds himself in a trap.

Alan Redpath - "He guaranteed safety at the expense of justice, and immediately the farsighted woman captured him in her trap."

Another commentator lists the factors that made her appeal so successful:

- She was a widow, which would invite sympathy.
- She lived at some distance from Jerusalem, which made it difficult to easily know or inquire of the facts of her case.
- She was old, which gave more dignity to her story.
- She wore the clothes of mourning to heighten the effect.
- She brought a case of family estrangement to David.
- She brought a case that was not too similar, lest it arouse David's suspicions.

12 Therefore the woman said, "Please, let your maidservant speak another word to my lord the king." And he said, "Say on." 13 So the woman said: "Why then have you schemed such a thing against the people of God? For the king speaks this thing as one who is guilty, in that the king does not bring his banished one home again. 14 For we will surely die and become like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. Yet God does not take away a life; but He devises means, so that His banished ones are not expelled from Him.

- I have to admit what this woman says to David has merit, and this on two fronts the first of which is concerning reconciliation.
- By that I mean like water spilled on the ground can't be gathered up again an opportunity to reconcile may be impossible again.
- Secondly, she appeals ever so brilliantly to God's attribute of reconciliation and restoration, which David was the recipient of.

Adam Clarke offers this insightful, “He is willing to pardon the meanest of his subjects the murder of a brother at the instance of a poor widow, and he is not willing to pardon his son Absalom, whose restoration to favour is the desire of the whole nation.”

15 Now therefore, I have come to speak of this thing to my lord the king because the people have made me afraid. And your maidservant said, ‘I will now speak to the king; it may be that the king will perform the request of his maidservant. 16 For the king will hear and deliver his maidservant from the hand of the man who would destroy me and my son together from the inheritance of God.’ 17 Your maidservant said, ‘The word of my lord the king will now be comforting; for as the angel of God, so is my lord the king in discerning good and evil. And may the LORD your God be with you.’ ”

- This is interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is she is coming clean with David about being put up to this.
- You can almost sense the fear in what she says, such that, subjects like her didn't just say what she said to the king and live.
- Also it's important to note that what she said is reconcile with Absalom at the expense of justice, instead of satisfying justice.

18 Then the king answered and said to the woman, “Please do not hide from me anything that I ask you.” And the woman said, “Please, let my lord the king speak.” 19 So the king said, “Is the hand of Joab with you in all this?” And the woman answered and said, “As you live, my lord the king, no one can turn to the right hand or to the left from anything that my lord the king has spoken. For your servant Joab commanded me, and he put all these words in the mouth of your maidservant. 20 To bring about this change of affairs your servant Joab has done this thing; but my lord is wise, according to the wisdom of the angel of God, to know everything that is in the earth.”

- I find it interesting that as soon as she confessed that she was put up to this, David knew it had Joab's fingerprints all over it.
- I also find it interesting that she's somewhat surprised to see David so quick in figuring out that it was in fact Joab who did this.
- Be that as it may, David finds himself in a conundrum as a father who wants to reconcile with his son, and a king who cannot.

21 And the king said to Joab, “All right, I have granted this thing. Go therefore, bring back the young man Absalom.” 22 Then Joab fell to the ground on his face and bowed himself, and thanked the king. And Joab said, “Today your servant knows that I have found favor in your sight, my lord, O king, in that the king has fulfilled the request of his servant.” 23 So Joab arose and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem. 24 And the king said, “Let him return to his own house, but do not let him see my face.” So Absalom returned to his own house, but did not see the king's face.

- It's been suggested that Joab's motives in reconciling David with Absalom were noble in that he had hoped to avoid a rebellion.
- While that may have certainly been the case as evidenced by Joab's loyalty to David, the way he goes about this is just wrong.
- I see Joab doing the right thing in the wrong way, and as such, it really doesn't end in the way that Joab would have hoped it to.

25 Now in all Israel there was no one who was praised as much as Absalom for his good looks. From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. 26 And when he cut the hair of his head—at the end of every year he cut it because it was heavy on him—when he cut it, he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels according to the king's standard.

- Couple of thoughts here, the first of which is, I really don't appreciate knowing about how much hair Absalom had on his head.
- Furthermore, I especially don't appreciate knowing that Absalom would actually weigh his hair at the end of his yearly haircut.
- Actually, I even have a problem knowing that he was so good looking that there wasn't even so much as a blemish head to toe.

27 To Absalom were born three sons, and one daughter whose name was Tamar. She was a woman of beautiful appearance. 28 And Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, but did not see the king's face. 29 Therefore Absalom sent for Joab, to send him to the king, but he would not come to him. And when he sent again the second time, he would not come. 30 So he said to his servants, “See, Joab's field is near mine, and he has barley there; go and set it on fire.” And Absalom's servants set the field on fire. 31 Then Joab arose and came to Absalom's house, and said to him, “Why have your servants set my field on fire?” 32 And Absalom answered Joab, “Look, I sent to you, saying, ‘Come here, so that I may send you to the king, to say, “Why have I come from Geshur? It would be better for me to be there still.” ’ Now therefore, let me see the king's face; but if there is iniquity in me, let him execute me.” 33 So Joab went to the king and told him. And when he had called for Absalom, he came to the king and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king. Then the king kissed Absalom.

- I would suggest that David's unwillingness to completely forgive and reconcile with his son made Absalom's bitterness grow.
- While this does not excuse what Absalom does to get his father's attention, but in some way it may explain what Absalom does.
- Sadly, it will be five years before Absalom will finally see his father, however, it's too late, as we'll see in the following chapters.

Alan Redpath - “David's forgiveness of Absalom was completely inadequate, leading to a further outbreak of sin. God's forgiveness of a man's soul is completely adequate, and a great deterrent to continued sin.”